

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----065991 211529Z /53

O 211451Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9329
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 4845

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR PBOR LE US UK IS
SUBJ: URQUHART VISIT TO BEIRUT

1. FOLLOWING IS A RECONSTRUCTION OF THE URQUHART VISIT TO BEIRUT ON AUGUST 19 ON THE BASIS OF BRIEFINGS GIVEN TO ME SUCCESSIVELY BY BRITISH AMBASSADOR WAKEFIELD, UN REP SAUNDERS, AND GHASSAN TUEINI ON AUGUST 21. IN URQUHART'S SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT SARKIS, HOSS AND BOUTROS, ALL TOOK GENERALLY THE SAME LINE IN AGREEING THAT PRIORITY NO. 1 IS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SC RES. 425. PREDICTABLY HOSS WAS THE TOUGHEST IN ASSERTING THAT LACK OF IMPLEMENTATION REFLECTED BADLY ON THE UN AND THE RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL, MOST PARTICULARLY THE U.S., IN GIVING THE LEBANESE ADVICE ON THE MOVE TO THE SOUTH THAT DID NOT WORK OUT IN PRACTICE.

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2. THE LEBANESE REVIEWED FOR URQUHART IN VERY SPECIFIC DETAIL ALL THE ACTIONS INVOLVED IN THE MOVEMENT OF THE BATTALION DOWN SOUTH, INCLUDING AMBASSADOR PARKER'S "LAS MINUTE NOCTURNAL WARNING PHONE CALL." THE LEBANESE CLAIMED THAT THEY HAD HAD ADVICE THAT DID NOT WORK OUT IN PRACTICE, AND THAT THEY CANNOT RELY ON

ISRAELI COMMITMENTS SINCE THE COOPERATIVE REPLIES RECEIVED FROM WEIZMAN WERE TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM THE STONE-WALLING OF THE ISRAELI MILITARY COMMANDERS ON THE GROUND. THE LEBANESE HAD LEFT THE FATED ILMAC MEETING OF JULY 30 AWARE THAT THERE WERE CLEARLY PROBLEMS BUT THINKING THAT THEY HAD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT ALL SIGNALS POINTED TO GREEN. THEY SAID THEY WERE THEREFORE STAGGERED BY AMBASSADOR PARKER'S NOCTURNAL PHONE CALL THAT SUNDAY NIGHT "SAYING STOP", WHICH THEY ASSERT WAS RECEIVED TOO LATE. (TUEINI COMMENTED TO ME, "THE ISRAELIS SIMPLY DID NOT TAKE US SERIOUSLY.")

3. URQUHART AND THE LEBANESE THEN DISCUSSED WHAT TO DO NEXT. IT WAS AGREED THAT THEY ARE IN A POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC OPERATION WHICH AT A SUB-SIDIARY LEVEL IS USING MILITARY MEANS FOR EXECUTION, AND THE WAY TO SOLVE IT IS NOT TO TRY TO SHOOT THE WAY THROUGH. THE ISSUE ARISES AS HOW TO HANDLE THE MATTER IN THE PERIOD BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL MEETS IN A MONTH TO RENEW THE UNIFIL MANDATE. THE ISSUE WAS DISCUSSED AS TO WHETHER THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE THE INITIATIVE BY PRESENTING ITS OWN LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL; HOWEVER, NO FIRM CONCLUSIONS WERE REACHED ON THIS. ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE IS TO LEAVE THE RECITATION OF THE CHRONICLE OF EVENTS TO WALDHEIM'S REPORT.

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4. THE QUESTION OF THE STATUS OF HADDAD WAS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE DISCUSSIONS. SARKIS AND BOUTROS STRESSED THAT THE MATTER HAD BECOME PARTICULARLY SERIOUS SINCE HADDAD HAD FIRED ON THE LAF; HOWEVER, THEY THOUGHT NOTHING PRACTICAL COULD BE DONE NOW EXCEPT TO PUT THE CASE AT THE TOP OF GENERAL KHOURY'S AGENDA. HOSS AGAIN TOOK A SLIGHTLY STRICTER LINE. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE CASE COULD NOT BE DEALT WITH NOW, BUT SAID THAT EVEN IF THE LAF BATTALION IS MOVED TO TIBNIN AND THE HADDAD CASE IS PUT ASIDE FOR THE MOMENT, IT CANNOT BE PUT ASIDE FOR LONG, SINCE LEAVING IT IN ABEYANCE WOULD MAKE LIFE DIFFICULT FOR LAF DETACHMENTS LATER ON CONTINUING TO MOVE SOUTH TO ATTEMPT TO ASSERT LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY IN THE AREA.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 4845

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5. ILMAC - THE LEBANESE STRONGLY WELCOMED A
RE-CONSTITUTION OF ILMAC ON THE CONDITION THAT THE
ISRAELIS DO NOT TRY TO CONVERT IT TO OTHER PURPOSES,
AND OPERATE OUTSIDE OF ITS LIMITED MANDATE. FURTHER-
MORE THE LEBANESE STRESSED THAT IN ORDER TO OPERATE
IN ILMAC, THE GOL MUST HAVE SOVEREIGNTY ON ITS OWN
TERRITORY.

6. UNIFIL -- IT WAS AGREED THAT THE NEXT IMMEDIATE
OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE TO EXPAND THE ROLE OF UNIFIL IN
THE ENCLAVES. SPECIFICALLY, ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE
MADE FOR GREATER FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT FOR THE UNIFIL
PERSONNEL NOW LOCATED AT STATIONARY POINTS WITHIN
THE ENCLAVES, AND MORE UNIFIL PERSONNEL SHOULD BE
BROUGHT INTO THE ENCLAVES. THE LEBANESE REALIZED
THAT SUCH PROPOSALS BRING UP THE SUBJECT OF THE
ISRAELI GATES AND THE GOOD FENCE. THE LEBANESE
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APPEARED TO REALIZE THAT IT IS NOT PRACTICAL FOR THEM
TO TRY TO RUSH FOR THE CLOSING DOWN OF THE GOOD FENCE.
IT WAS AGREED THAT IN THE PAST FIVE MONTHS THE
PRESENCE OF UNIFIL HAD SUCCEEDED IN TRANSFORMING
THE SITUATION IN THE SOUTH FROM A DESOLATE

WILDERNESS STREWN WITH CORPSES AND WRACKED BY FEAR INTO AN AREA THAT IS NOW MORE PEACEFUL THAN BEIRUT. ACCORDINGLY THE GOL AND THE UN SHOULD CONTINUE TO BUILD ON WHAT IS THERE, KEEPING UNIFIL AT WORK ON SUPERVISING THE RESTORATION OF NORMAL LIFE. MOST OF THE LEBANESE TEACHERS HAVE RETURNED. A MORE DELICATE TASK WHICH WILL TAKE MORE TIME WILL BE THE RESTORATION OF ATTRIBUTES OF LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY SUCH AS THE POLICE AND THE COURT SYSTEM. WE MUST FEEL OUR WAY AND BE PATIENT.

7. FOLLOWING HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ISRAELIS ON THIS SUBJECT, URQUHART WILL RETURN TO BEIRUT ON AUGUST 22 TO BRIEF THE GOL ON WHAT HE WAS ABLE TO WORK OUT WITH THE ISRAELIS. FOLLOWING THIS MEETING HE WILL RETURN TO ISRAEL TO DEPART FOR EUROPE AND REPORT TO WALDHEIM. BOTH TUEINI AND SAUNDERS UNDERTOOK TO BRIEF ME ON THE RESULTS OF URQUHART'S FINAL DISCUSSIONS IN BEIRUT AS SOON THEREAFTER AS FEASIBLE. I AM SEEING BOUTROS TOMORROW MORNING TO CONVEY TO HIM OUR POLICY ON ILMAC (STATE 211403) BUT THIS WILL BE BEFORE HIS MEETING WITH URQUHART.

8. WAKEFIELD TOLD ME THAT UNTIL THIS VISIT URQUHART HAD NOT BEEN AWARE OF THE EXPLOSIVENESS OF THE PRESENT SITUATION IN BEIRUT AND ITS POTENTIAL FOR ISRAELI-SYRIAN HOSTILITIES. EVIDENTLY WAKEFIELD EDUCATED HIM ON THIS SCORE.

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